



**An Introduction to Fragments of the Real History of Israel:  
An Essay on the Egyptian Influence on the ‘Proto-Israelites’,  
and the Implications of Josephus’ and Manetho’s  
Unequivocal Identification  
of the Proto-Israelites with the Hyksos  
With Prof. Dr. H.K. Brugsch’s Insightful Thoughts  
on the True Meaning and Identity of the ”Baal-Zephon”  
of the Book of Exodus  
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Front page image: This striking black and white photograph of some highly unusual granite sphinxes, the so-called Tanis or Hyksos Sphinxes, discovered by the famous French egyptologist François Auguste Ferdinand Mariette (1821–1881), also known as Mariette Bey (Bey being an honorary title), in c. 1860, comes from one of 46 scrapbooks (volume 26, p. 36) created by the American William Vaughn Tupper (1835–1898) to document his travels. For more on these, see: [https://www.bpl.org/archival\\_post/tupper-scrapbook-collection/](https://www.bpl.org/archival_post/tupper-scrapbook-collection/) These scrapbooks are now in the custody of Boston Public Library, which has digitized and published some of their contents on Wikimedia Commons.

The main caption for the photograph, presumably written by Mr. Tupper, who is citing the assessment of another famous French egyptologist, Sir Gaston Camille Charles Maspero (1846–1916), set down in his *Guide du visiteur au Musée du Caire*, reads as follows:

“Hyksos Sphinx Excavations Tanis. Mariette 1863. Considered by him [Mariette] 'comme des produits de l'art des Pasteurs.' (1) These differ from other Egyptian monuments in a very marked way as one sees by comparing them with the Sphinx[es] of Tutmes III and Ramses II. The face is round, the eyes are small, the nose flattened, the cheek bones projecting, the lower lip slightly advanced, the ears are those of a bull while the mane of a lion encircles the visage. (2)

On one of them one can decipher the name of the Shepherd King Apopi [Apepa] (3). Later Meneptah (4) erased the name and substituted his cartouches. Still later Pasebxanu (5) XXI dynasty put his name on the breast, erasing that of the monarch for whom it was graven. This gives ground for a German theory that it antedates 'les Pasteurs' [the Shepherds] and belongs to XII. Dynasty."

(1) "to be the works of the art of the Shepherds" (i.e. the Hyksos). Translation by Boston Public Library.

(2) "Ils se distinguent en effet des autres monuments par des caractères bien tranchés, comme on le reconnaîtra sans peine, si l'on compare leur tête à celle des sphinx de Thoutmôsis III et de Ramsès II. La face est ronde, les yeux sont petits, les narines écrasées, les pommettes saillantes: la lèvre inférieure avance légèrement ; les oreilles sont celles du taureau, et une crinière de lion encadre le visage." Original French statement by Sir Maspero added by Boston Public Library.

(3) Also known as Apep or Apophis

(4) Pharaoh Merneptah

(5) Psusennes/Hor-Pasebakhaenniut; of the twentyfirst dynasty, which was based in Tanis, and which was likely of foreign, possibly "Hyksos", origin.

Photographer: Sebah, J. Pascal. Title: 215 Sphinx Hyksos (Musee Ghizeh). Date: Ca. 1888–1890

**[On the True Nature and Identity, and the Actual Position in the Divine Hierarchy, of the Deity Often Referred to as YHWH – also Known as Yahweh, Jehovah and Yahoo(ah)]**

The question that prompted the following investigation might be phrased as follows: *Who or what is the Old Testament supernatural entity often referred to as YHWH?*

Upon consideration of that problem, it appeared to us that a response would have to begin with uncovering, if possible, the origins of the Old Testament religion, as set forth in books such as Exodus. However, in order to accomplish that, it seemed abundantly clear to the undersigned that it would be necessary to take a closer look at ancient Egypt.

**Why? In the first place, the one indispensable religious rite in both “Israelism” and modern Judaism (or rather “Judaisms”) is male circumcision. However, as we intend to show, there are actually no *reasonable* grounds for doubting that male circumcision – even as a religious rite – *originated in Egypt*. [Moreover, the evidence shows that the ancient Egyptians were circumcising themselves at a time significantly predating the one assigned to the “Old Testament” protagonist Abraham.]**

In the second place, the name of what is arguably the most important character in the story underlying the foundation of the Nation of Israel – “Moses” or “Moshe” – is, in all likelihood, an Egyptian name, since a similar or identical word forms part of the names of numerous Egyptian pharaohs.

But there is more. The excavations carried out at the Egyptian site “Tell el-Dab’a”, the location of the ancient city of Avaris [, which was situated exceedingly close to the later settlement known as Pi-Ramesses, or simply Rameses/Ramesses], would appear to shed new light on the ancient disagreement between the Jewish [or Judeo-Roman] historian Titus Flavius Josephus (37–100 A.D.) and the Egyptian historian Manetho (c. 300 B.C.) regarding the history of Israel.

To say that Egypt played a central role in Israelite history is, in one sense, not to say anything new at all, but simply to affirm what every orthodox Christian, Jew and Muslim already believes. However, if taken in the sense here intended, it entails a view of Israelite history which is highly controversial, and which will probably remain so for a long time to come, since it goes against and undercuts the stark dichotomy of an “evil” and “oppressive” Egypt versus a “divinely chosen” and “oppressed” Israel set up in Old Testament books such as Exodus, and repeatedly referred to and made use of in later Israelite and Christian works.

### **[Male circumcision – already an important feature of Egyptian life some 4400 years ago]**

Let us begin by examining the phenomenon of male circumcision. Several pieces of evidence from the ancient world make it quite clear that the earliest known practitioners of male circumcision were in fact the ancient Egyptians.

The earliest such piece of evidence appears to be the bas-relief at the Necropolis of Saqqara in Lower Egypt. There, in the tomb of a man named Ankhmahor, a stone carving depicts the apparently important event of the circumcision of two adult males. The relief has been dated to approximately 2375 B.C. (Peck, 2013, pp. 112–114).

Our next testimony is located in the writings of [the Greek historian] Herodotus (c. 484–425 B.C.). Although it must be said that Herodotus lived at a rather late epoch if we consider the long life of the Egyptian civilization, the fact that he was almost two and a half thousand years closer in time to the second millennium B.C. – the time we are the most interested in – should cause his reports to carry some weight.

Near the beginning of his presentation of Egypt, while laying out the customs of the Egyptians, and showing how different they tend to be from those of other peoples, he mentions that “The Egyptians and those who have learned it from them are the only people who practise circumcision.” (2019, 2.36)

The most detailed consideration of the origin of male circumcision comes a few paragraphs later, however, in Herodotus’ discussion of the military campaign of the Egyptian pharaoh “Sesostris” and the identity of the Colchians:

“(…) but my better proof was that the Colchians [a colony of Egyptians] and Egyptians and Ethiopians are the only nations that have from the first practised circumcision. **The Phoenicians and the Syrians of Palestine acknowledge that they learned the custom from the Egyptians** (...). But as to the Egyptians and Ethiopians themselves, I cannot say which nation learned it from the other; for it is evidently a very ancient custom.” (2019, 2.104 [, emphasis added])

### **[The OT taboos on dealing with swine and on woollen clothing: Egyptian as well]**

It is not only what Herodotus says of circumcision which is of interest to the question of the origins of the Israelite religion, however.

Near the introduction to his presentation of Egypt, Herodotus says of the Egyptians that “they instituted customs and laws contrary for the most part to those of the rest of mankind.” (2019, 2.35) A little later we learn that

**“Swine are held by the Egyptians to be unclean beasts.** In the first place, if an Egyptian touches a hog in passing, he goes to the river and dips himself in it, clothed as he is; and in the second place, swineherds, though native born Egyptians, are alone of all men forbidden to enter any Egyptian temple (...).” (2019, 2.47, emphasis added)

Herodotus also mentions another Egyptian religious taboo which would appear to be echoed in the Old Testament – the curious restrictions on the use of wool:

“(…) nothing woollen is brought into temples, or buried with them: that is impious. They agree in this with practices which are called Orphic and Bacchic, but which are in fact Egyptian and Pythagorean (...).” (2019, 2.81)

Reading this, a student familiar with the Bible cannot but be reminded of the following passage in Ezekiel, which, amazingly, fits the Egyptian practice described above almost perfectly:

“But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok (...) when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and **no wool shall come upon them, whiles they minister in the gates of the inner court, and within.**”  
(Ezekiel 44:15–17, KJV, emphasis added)

### [The surprising testimonies of Josephus and Manetho on the topic of Israel's origins]

That seems to be about as far as Herodotus is able to assist us in our undertaking. We now turn our attention to two other ancient writers, the Egyptian historian Manetho (who lived around 300 B.C.) and the Judeo–Roman historian Flavius Josephus (37/38–100 A.D.).

Much of what Manetho wrote has long since disappeared, but certain passages in his [once extensive and important] history of Egypt which might shed some light on Israelite origins have been partially preserved in the [polemical] work now called *Against Apion*, which Josephus composed in an effort to reply to various claims which he disliked regarding the people of Israel.

In *Against Apion*, while responding to certain parts of Manetho, Josephus makes a number of statements which, if they can be shown to be at least somewhat reliable, would do much to solve the mysteries still surrounding the emergence of “Israel”.

One such statement is made by Josephus at the very beginning of his discussion of Manetho. There he claims that Manetho “writes concerning us”:

“(...) Manetho was a man who was by birth an Egyptian; yet had he made himself master of the Greek learning: as is very evident. Now **this Manetho, in the second book of his Egyptian history, writes concerning us** [i.e. the ‘Hebrews’ or ‘Israelites’] in the following manner. **I will set down his very words** (...):

‘There was a King of ours whose name was Timaus. Under him (...) there came, after a surprising manner, men of ignoble birth out of the eastern parts, and had boldness enough to make an expedition into our country, and with ease subdued it by force; yet without our hazarding a battle with them. So when they had gotten those that governed

us under their power, they afterwards burnt down our cities, and demolished the temples of the Gods (...)” (2019, 1.14, emphasis added)

As is immediately apparent from the above quotation, Josephus’ identification of the invaders from “the eastern parts” of which Manetho wrote with “us”, meaning the Children of Israel, has momentous implications. If true, it would mean that the second millennium B.C. ancestors of Israel were more or less identical to the people known as the Hyksos – as Josephus himself goes on to show. For, in the rest of the quote, Manetho narrates that the first king of the invaders, Salatis, decided to make the city of Avaris, now known as the Capital of the Hyksos (Bietak, 1996), his stronghold:

‘(...) he found in the Saite Nomos [Seth-roite], a city (...) called Avaris; this he rebuilt; and made very strong by the walls he built about it, and by a most numerous garrison of two hundred and forty thousand armed men which he put into it to keep it.’ (2019, 1.14)

Furthermore, Manetho, as quoted by Josephus, explains that it was the Egyptians who called this people “Hyksos” (2019, 1.14).

**A little later, Josephus once again affirms that the Hyksos of Manetho, who called themselves “captives in their sacred books” are the ancestors of Israel (2019, 1.14).**

The part of Josephus’ Manetho which truly stands out to the reader familiar with the Biblical Exodus story is, however, the one where Manetho speaks of a great and protracted struggle between the native Egyptians and the Hyksos, eventually ending in a kind of armistice, under which the Hyksos were allowed to leave Egypt in peace, provided that they never return:

“After these, he [Manetho] says, that the Kings of Thebais [Thebes], and of the other parts of Egypt made an insurrection against the shepherds [the Hyksos]; and that there a terrible and long war was made between them. He says farther, ‘that under a King whose name was Alisphragmuthosis, the shepherds were subdued by him; and were (...) were shut up in (...) Avaris.’ Manetho says, ‘that the shepherds built a wall round all this place (...).



But that Thummosis, the son of Alisphragmuthosis, made an attempt to take them by force, and by siege; (...) but (...) came to a composition with them: that they should leave Egypt, and go, without any harm to be done to them, whithersoever they would: (...) they went away with their whole families and effects, not fewer in number than two hundred and forty thousand; and took their journey from Egypt, through the wilderness, for Syria [often a designation for much of Palestine and the Levant in ancient times].” (2019, 1.14)

As we can see, we here find an extra-biblical story of an “Exodus” from Egypt, having, if we look at the broad outlines, so much in common with the Old Testament “Exodus” that it can hardly be doubted that Manetho and the Bible are referring to the same series of events – unless both the “Manethonian” and the biblical account are fictional.

Granted, a modern reader familiar with ancient Egypt will quickly spot obvious inaccuracies and peculiarities in Manetho’s history pertaining to details such as time spans and pharaonic names. But then Manetho composed his account of the Hyksos–Egyptian conflict more than a millennium after the epoch when it took place.

It seems to us that the question should not be if all the data is accurate, but rather if it is believable that *two* of the foremost historians of the ancient world were both *wholly* wrong when they established a link between the Hyksos and the Israelites.

### **[The identity of Rameses with Avaris, and excavations corroborating Manetho]**

If we now assume that the Hyksos were indeed “proto-Israelites”, the next logical question in this search for the origins of YHWH is where we may find indications of what the Hyksos religion was like. As it turns out, there are several ancient textual sources which provide us with hints of what that religion consisted in. The accuracy of such sources is often contested, though. However, with the rediscovery of ancient Egypt which began with Napoleon’s conquest, and which has continued to this very day, a new source of information is gradually emerging – archaeological remains. Concerning the Hyksos, more and more of the ancient city of Avaris is being uncovered, and these excavations have yielded profoundly intriguing results.

As the report *Avaris: Capital of the Hyksos* points out, both the city of Avaris and the later development close by it of Piramesse were once located at one of the most strategically important areas in Egypt – the one where the then easternmost, so-called Pelusiac branch of the Nile, flowing north towards the Mediterranean, not only created natural harbours and easily defensible islands but also met the ancient highway known as the Road of Horus, which connected north-eastern Egypt with the Sinai Peninsula and the coast of Canaan. (Bietak, 1996, p. 3)

This discovery is by itself important, as it means that the site of Avaris is virtually identical to the location the Old Testament [or Torah] calls “Rameses” (as in Genesis 47:11, Exodus 12:37, Numbers 33:3, etc.). It is also right in the middle of the wider region the Old Testament calls the Land of Goshen (Genesis 45:10, Genesis 46:28, etc.).

According to the report by Prof. Manfred Bietak, Avaris began to see an influx of settlers from Canaan (and possibly from as far away as the city of Byblos in Syria) as early as towards the end of the Twelfth Dynasty, meaning in the 1800s B.C. (Bietak, 1996, p. 5, 14) This influx appears to have consisted mainly of “highly Egyptianized” (p. 5) Canaanites who arrived in Egypt peacefully, in order to work as mercenaries for the Egyptian Crown (p. 14, 19).

Around 150 years later, “after 1750” B.C., a “sudden increase” in certain types of pottery indicate the occurrence of a significant new wave of immigration to Avaris from the Levant (p. 55). In the words of the report, “It would appear that the Egyptian crown was either in need of more people from the Levant (...) or was unable to control the influx of population from the Levant (...) (p. 55).

At the time which is usually seen as the beginning of the Hyksos period, the early 1600s B.C., another significant change in the composition of the ceramics points to a strong relationship between Avaris and “southern Palestine” – and particularly between Avaris and the city of Sharuhén, the modern Tell el-‘Ajjul, in present-day Gaza (p. 59). This Sharuhén is known to have been another “stronghold of the Hyksos” (p. 60), and Bietak muses that the gradual movement of people from the north and into southern Palestine and Egypt could reflect a “process of colonization” (p. 60).

During the late Hyksos period, the 1500s, huge fortifications, including walls 8.5 meters thick (!), emerge at the Avaris river banks – likely protecting “a major, most probably royal residential area” (pp. 63–64).

There is also the stela of vassal-king Kamose (who reigned from c. 1555 to 1550), which clearly demonstrates that the relations between the Hyksos and the Theban Egyptians [the demographic entity to which Kamose belonged] were by this time less than amicable, to put it *mildly* (p. 65).

As Bietak notes, Kamose “tried to shake off the yoke of the foreign rulers by an attack on Avaris”, and on his stela, “he boasts of having threatened his former overlord, ‘the vile Asiatic’, Apophis.” (p. 65) [“Vile Asiatics” are also spoken of in the strange and disturbing *Admonitions of Ipuwer* papyrus, studied intensively by the Egyptologist Sir Alan Henderson Gardiner (1879–1963) a century ago, by the way.]

Of even greater interest may, however, be the discoveries of remnants of Hyksos “palatial architecture and stelae” which appear to *confirm* parts of Manetho’s Hyksos king list (p. 65). “Salitis”, mentioned earlier, appears to be a corrupted form of Sekerher or SikruHaddu, an actual Hyksos king, and “Iannas” could be Janassi, the eldest son of Hyksos king Khajan (p. 65).

Even the use of the term “Hyksos” is confirmed, in an inscription (p. 65) with a statement which we suspect could be interpreted as *mocking* the god Horus, one of the chief symbols of Egypt.

Since the Hyksos king names mentioned above are Western Semitic names (p. 65), and these kings therefore presumably spoke a Semitic language, while the term Hyksos was applied to the Semites of Avaris by the Egyptians, the king seems to be saying something like this: “Behold, you Egyptians, with that supposedly great Horus of yours – a foreigner, a Hyksos, even, is determining the boundaries of your land!”

Having established the corroboration of elements of Manetho – and thereby of elements of Josephus – by archaeological finds in Avaris and elsewhere in Egypt, and the probability of a familial relationship between the Hyksos and the early Israelites – the former being a Western

Semitic-speaking people, of Canaanite/Palestinian and Syrian origin, with a second power base in southern Palestine – we now turn to a consideration of Hyksos' religious beliefs.

### **[Further evidence of the nature of the religion of the Hyksos or “Shepherds”]**

We have already presented, with the second quote from Manetho, a slight hint of what these might be. But let us now examine this topic more closely. We shall use one of the archaeological finds as our point of departure. According to the above mentioned report, excavations in the area of what had once been a palace lead to the discovery of “a haematite cylinder seal” from the first half of the 1700s B.C., depicting “the northern Syrian weather-god” Baal Zephon (Bietak, 1996, p. 26, 29). Bietak proceeds to link Baal Zephon with Seth:

Within the community of Canaanite settlers he was probably the most important local deity and understandably he was soon identified with his Egyptian counterpart, the god Sutekh or Seth, who was also a weather-god. (p. 29)

While these are important observations, both ancient and modern sources of knowledge of Egyptian theology make it quite clear that the god or principle of Seth was much more than a “weather-god”.

Although Seth was part of a “divine family” including his brother Osiris, his sister Isis, and his sister *and* wife Nephthys (Budge, 1969, k.l. 4929), a more important role of his appears to have been that of the god who constantly opposed the highly important god Horus (k.l. 4943–4956). Together, Horus and Seth apparently formed a pair representing the two fundamental natural forces of “Light and Darkness, Day and Night, (...) Cosmos and Chaos, (...) Life and Death, or (...) Good and Evil” (k.l. 4961) – in a manner reminiscent of the two opposing forces in Persian Zoroastrianism, or of the “Yin” and “Yang” of Chinese philosophy, for example.

In a different version of this story of contending powers, Seth attempts to prevent the rising of the sun, symbolizing Ra, the sun god, by morphing into a giant serpent, Apep, armed with cloud, mist, rain and darkness (k.l. 4999–5004).

Incidentally, Apophis, another form of Apep (k.l. 8311), was, as we have seen, the name of one of the Hyksos kings (Bietak, 1996, p. 65). [Confronted with this, one cannot but wonder: What sane ruler, whether a conqueror or not, would choose to name himself, or, if he did not choose his name, be named by those who named him, after a huge and terrible snake, and one feared and loathed by his reluctant Egyptian subjects?]

While Horus was represented pictorially as having the head of a falcon, Seth was depicted as having the head of an animal with a curious, protruding snout and tall, pricked ears (Budge, 1969, k.l. 4964–4974). No one knows if an actual Egyptian animal, presently unknown to us, inspired the latter representation, but with a bit of imagination, it could be seen as reminiscent of the head of a very lean donkey – or even of the head of the aardvark, the African “earth pig” (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1998). That may, as we shall see, be significant.

Concerning the connection between Baal Zephon and Seth, Bietak and others appear to construe a kind of independent existence for the former, and to propose the idea that even though Baal Zephon came to be “identified” with Seth verbally, the Semites in Avaris were nevertheless worshipping the god of their ancestors, and not the Egyptian Seth (1996, p. 29). That kind of division seems to us rather indefensible. The great similarity between Baal Zephon, which in Hebrew came to mean Lord of the North, and the Egyptian Seth, is well illustrated by the fact that Seth was *also* a god associated with the north, and with the kind of weather originating in the north (k.l. 5075–5082).

In a similar omission of what to us seems like an important point, the report on Avaris goes into considerable detail regarding the numerous discoveries of buried donkeys in the city – including pairs of donkeys interred in front of one of the major temples (Bietak, 1996, p. 25, pp. 40–41) – *but never considers the fact that the donkey was closely associated with Seth*.

Granted, the report discusses various other possible motivations for the ritual slaughtering of donkeys, such as its importance to caravan trade (p. 25) and the making of treaties (p. 40). Still, since the donkey, rather unsurprisingly, appears to have been seen as a kind of incarnation of Seth, or as belonging to Seth – as ancient authors such as Plutarch demonstrate (Budge, 1969, k.l. 5139–5171), and as Egyptian archaeological finds provide some confirmation of (k.l. 5171–5176) – it seems to us that some mention of this would have been warranted.

### **[The curious “acting out” on the stage of the world of the Eternal Cosmic Drama]**

Now that we have examined both Seth, and his role in Egyptian theology, and the Hyksos-Egyptian conflict, we are in a position to perceive a rather baffling coincidence: The close correlation between the mythological struggle between Seth and Horus, and the real-world struggle between the Egyptians and the Hyksos. It is as if both parties, at first unconsciously, incarnate in history the divine actors in a perennial drama in the Realm of Spirit.

Gradually, both parties seem to become very aware of this correlation, to such a degree that one or more Hyksos kings are given “Sethian” names, and apparently make a point of worshipping Seth alone, while the Egyptians opposing them begin to think of Seth more and more in light of the [hated] Hyksos domination. As E. A. Wallis Budge concludes:

In early dynastic times it is tolerably certain that the worship of Set was widespread (...) but about B.C. 1700 a change came over his fortunes, and the Egyptians began to show the greatest detestation for him. (...) it appears that the popularity of his cult suffered greatly at this period because he was associated with the occupation of Northern Egypt by the Hyksos (...). (1969, k.l. 5100 –5106)

### **[Probable traces of the cult of Seth in the cult of YHWH, as set forth in the OT]**

The question which now presents itself is if it is possible to discern traces of an influence from the Hyksos Avaris era and its cult of Seth/Baal Zephon on the Old Testament. Since there is no room for a detailed study of that topic here, we will have to content ourselves with mentioning a few points which might be worthy of further consideration.

In the first place, the god of the Exodus, for example, is a tempestuous god, in both a literal and metaphorical sense. He guides the Israelites out of Egypt with “a pillar of cloud” by day and “a pillar of fire” by night (Exodus 13:20–22), for example – and the “pillar” is the typical shape of a cloud of thunder and rain. That is also how he conceals himself from the Israelites when meeting with Moses (Exodus 33:8–10). As for his stormy temper, we need only mention passages such as Exodus 32:7–14 and Numbers 14:11–35 and 25.

In the second place, the god of the Exodus is associated with the desert and with foreign lands – which is also a characteristic of Seth (Budge, 1969, k.l. 4967). This is perhaps most clearly seen in the story of Moses’ encounter with “the angel of the Lord” in the desert of “Midian” (Exodus 3), in present-day Saudi Arabia. But the theme of “the desert” or “the wilderness” is, as we know, a prevalent one throughout the Old Testament.

**In the third place, the donkey or ass is sometimes granted a special status, both in the Book of Exodus and in other Old Testament books. One of the most puzzling instances of this is found in Exodus 13:11–16, where the Israelites are commanded to redeem “every firstling of an ass” and “all the firstborn of man among thy children” (KJV). The firstborn male donkey is the only animal that is to be redeemed in this way, and the reason given is that “all the firstborn of my children I redeem”. The commandment is repeated in Exodus 34:20.**

Another instance suggesting some sort of veneration of donkeys is located in the story of Balaam and the she-ass in Numbers 22:21–35, where the female donkey is initially the only creature capable of seeing “the angel of the Lord”, while Balaam only gains the ability to perceive this hierophany once the she-ass has begun speaking to him.

The final instance we will mention is the famous prophesy in Zechariah 9:9–10, of such importance to [Old Testament-accepting] Christians, where it is said that the future Messiah will come “riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.” Interestingly, the text is phrased so that it could be understood as saying either that the ass, a male donkey, will be a colt, or, alternatively, that the Messiah will be riding on *a pair* of donkeys, one of which will be a colt.

In the fourth place, there is a close association between YHWH and the Old Testament entity named “the destroyer”, as is evidenced by Exodus 12:23, for example, where the text seems to be saying that YHWH will be travelling together with and exercise control over the dark actions of “ham-maš-ḥîṭ”. In Isaiah 54:16 we learn, moreover that “the destroyer” (“maš·ḥîṭ”) was created by YHWH himself. There is also “the plunderer” of Jeremiah 51:56, for instance.

Some term this “destroyer” the Angel of Death, but if an angel of YHWH, then it can reasonably be said to be a principle emanating from YHWH himself – making the presence of a “Sethian” aspect of YHWH a fairly unavoidable conclusion.

**[Exodus: An example of the same type of inversion as that denigrating the “Abkallu”?]**

Finally, it may make sense to consider what the motivation for the creation of a book such as Exodus is likely to have been. Is it believable that a group of Canaanite provincials in the hill country of Palestine set about creating a “foundation myth” with a fictitious stay in Egypt as one of its central components – a myth based on exclusively on borrowed legends and flights of fancy – at a time when Egypt was in decline (after c. 1000 B.C.)? *Why the intense antagonism towards the Egypt of its “glory days” in the 2nd millennium B.C.? Why the making of that [highly] sophisticated [ancient High] Civilization into a mere byword for “wickedness”?* Why, at the same time, the presence of Egyptian customs in the Israelite religion?

Knowing what we now know of ancient Egyptian history, it seems probable that parts of the Old Testament or Torah is a kind of “counter-history”, gradually composed by the scattered remnants of the Hyksos as a way to cope with the humiliation associated with having been forced to leave Lower Egypt, where they and their kinsfolk had had a powerful presence for hundreds of years. [That the Old Testament lore concerning the so-called Watchers or Abkallu is precisely such “counter-history” or “counter-literature”, inverting older, non-Israelite traditions for polemical purposes, has been conclusively demonstrated by Amar Annus, in his seminal journal article “On the Origin of Watchers: A Comparative Study of the Antediluvian Wisdom in Mesopotamian and Jewish Traditions” (2010).]

*However*, since they were, in a sense, Egyptians themselves, having been thoroughly “Egyptianized”, they could hardly rid themselves of all things Egyptian. Hence, they decided to imagine that their Egyptian customs and religious beliefs were actually not Egyptian at all.

Once this “counter-history” [and this “re-imagining” of the past] began to take hold, [not only in Palestine, but in the wider world,] defeat was [gradually] turned into victory.



## Addendum:

### Prof. Dr. Brugsch-Bey on the true meaning and location of “Baal Zephon”:

#### (H)Avaris, Capital of the Hyksos

Excerpts from the “Additions and Notes: Notes on the Exodus” section of Brugsch's  
*A History of Egypt under the Pharaohs*

7. *Baal-zephon*. The identification of Mons Casius with the place called *Baal-zephon*, that is 'Baal of the North,' or 'Lord of the North,' is not proved by monumental evidence. The word Casius is derived from the (Semitic) name Hazina or Hazian for all the country to the east of the Pelusiac branch [of the Nile river] ; (6) and it is preserved clearly enough in the modern appellation of *Qantarah-el-Hazneh*.

Baal-zephon, which I have *supposed* to be Mons Casius, allows of two explanations : either it is the translation of the Egyptian title *neb-mehi*, 'Lord of the North,' given to the god Amon worshipped in this country, and surnamed likewise *neb-Khirot*, 'lord of the lagoons,' or it is the *transcription* of the Egyptian name of the city *Hauar* (or *-ual*), the first element of which (Ha = 'house') has been suppressed, just as in the Hebrew name R'amses in place of the Egyptian Pi-r'amses ('abode of R'amses').

The correspondence of the Hebrew word Ba'al () with the Egyptian u'ar or u'al (meaning 'leg ; ' see my *Dict. Geogr.* App. s. v. u'ar) presents no stumbling-block, when we call to mind that the Hebrew Ba'al is rendered in Egyptian sometimes by b'ar, sometimes by u'ar. (7)

[Here we may also observe that r, the sound, has a tendency to morph into l, and vice versa, over the course of the life of a language or language family.]

From this would follow the important result, that the place *Ba'al-zephon*, 'the city of Ba'al of the North', would be the same as Ha-u'ar, that is to say, as the AVARIS of Manetho.

**And, as there were several places named u'ar in the geographical nomenclature of Egypt, there is every probability that the one designated in the Bible as *Baal-ZEPHON* answers to the 'Avaris OF THE NORTH' of the Egyptian texts, situated to the east of the Pelusiac branch of the Nile.**

Lepsius [Karl Richard Lepsius, the Prussian Egyptologist of fame; 1810–1884], who has travelled over this part of Lower Egypt, has established by full proof that the long ruins (ramparts now covered with sand) at the place called Tel-el-Her (or Hir) mark the site of the ancient Ha-u'ar. (8)

[It seems that this “Tel-el-Her” has to be identical to the site which is now usually styled Tell el Dab'a.]

**8. *The Site of the Hebrew Camp.*** In summing up my latest researches, it appears to me that the Hebrews, on quitting *Etham*, directed their march towards Migdol, where they encamped opposite to Avaris (*Baal-zephon*). **With this interpretation all becomes clear.** (9)

[All does indeed become very clear, Prof. Brugsch – and yet, some 150 years after discoveries such as these, the vast majority of ordinary people have still never so much as heard of them, and virtually all the Christian churches and many Christian scholars are behaving as if absolutely nothing has changed or been uncovered since the dawn of the nineteenth century, when the information gathered together by eminent professors like Brugsch should have constituted a watershed moment in both academic and religious history.]

#### **Editorial footnotes to the above “Additions and notes” by Brugsch himself**

**(6)** The distinction between the uses of the word Casius, for a definite spot and in a wider sense, forms an important element in the whole question. Herodotus (ii. 6, iii. 5) first mentions it as a mountain extending beside Lake Sirbonis *to the sea*, which may mean a range of hills or a mere promontory. In some passages of Strabo, &c., the name seems to apply to the region S. of the lake. On the other hand Mons Casius is distinctly defined as a hill, forming a promontory on the sea-coast (answering precisely to the headland called *Ras Katieh* or *El Gelse*), 40 Roman miles east of Pelusium, and 24 west of Ostracena (Strab. i. p. 58 ; xvi.

p. 759; Itin. Ant. p. 152). There would also seem to have been a place Casium, distinct from Mount Casius.

But, in whichever sense, the name *Casius* is taken from the Egyptian name of the district *Hazian*, and has no *direct* connection with Baal-zephon. Strong as is the evidence furnished by the temple of Jupiter Casius for regarding the place as a 'Baal-zephon,' the argument applies to *any* sanctuary of that god, and most of all to *Avaris*, the chief seat of the Hyksos, whose special deity he was. ED.

(7) Readers who do not know Hebrew should be informed that the second letter of the alphabet (Beth) represents both B and U or V.

(8) See the interesting description of these ruins by Mr. Greville Chester (*ut sup. cit.* p. 148): 'Tel-el-Hir marks the site of a town of large extent and considerable importance, and its surface is strewn with innumerable sherds of pottery, ancient glass of fine quality, and bits of hewn stone ' (some of which seem to be window frames). On the west side of the Tel, the side farthest from the desert, rise the remains of a massive square tower, each of whose sides measures about 94 paces [one pace being c. 0.76 meters]. The north, south, and western sides of this fortress descend into *an immense desiccated lake or marsh*. The eastern side of the tower, which is built of crude brick, is joined to the rest of the sandy Tel, which extends eastwards to the desert. ... It is at once evident to the eye that this was an important frontier fortress.'

**This answers in all respects to the Hyksos' frontier fortress of Hau'ar (Avaris), which has been already described in the History (Vol. I, pp. 23–67). It stood at the N.E. frontier of Egypt, on the right side of the Pelusiatic arm of the Nile, and had on its *west* side either a lake or estuary (the 'Pa-zetku of Avaris') on which the sailor Aahmes [the name of an Egyptian soldier who left a personal account of his battles with the Hyksos, a name now usually transliterated into English as Ahmose, which, in this case, does not refer to the famous Pharaoh Amasis or Ahmose, Liberator of Egypt from the Hyksos yoke, but, as indicated, to a mariner] fought under the king his namesake in a naval battle with the Hyksos, and also water on its *south* side. (Vol. I. pp. 28–45.)**

Finally, its distance (about 7 or 8 miles) from Brugsch's site of Migdol (Tel-es-Sammut, Mr.

Chester's Tel-Habooa) gives a fit site for the camp of the Israelites 'between Migdol and the sea' (the estuary of the Pelusiac [branch of the] Nile) 'in face of Baal-zephon.' ED.

(10) (...). If the transference of the catastrophe to this region loses much of that wonderful appropriateness which we have seen in the causeway between Lake Sirbonis and the sea, **Strabo supplies us with another striking parallel to show that we are not limited to this or that spot on the Mediterranean shore for sudden movements of wind and water such as overwhelmed the Egyptian host. The geographer relates (xvi. p. 758) how, after a battle on the coast between Tyre and Ptolemais (Acre), 'a wave from the sea, like the rising tide, overwhelmed the fugitives ; some were carried out to sea and drowned, others perished in the hollows ; then again the ebb succeeding *uncovered and displayed to sight the bodies lying in confusion among dead fish*' (comp. Exod. xiv. 30). ED.**

[This incident, related by Strabo, the Greek geographer, bears a curious resemblance to the one the Book of Exodus claims befell the Egyptian army pursuing the “Israelites” – the main differences between the two narratives being, of course, that Strabo's wave of water hit *fugitives*, on the coast of Palestine. Could the fugitives here referred to be the Hyksos who had left Avaris, and who were trying to reach their second stronghold of Sharuhén (the city mentioned by Bietak), while being pursued by Pharaoh Ahmose, who then laid siege to Sharuhén, and eventually destroyed it?]

**(Brugsch-Bey, 1881, pp. 427–429, emphasis added)**

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K.l. refers to “Kindle Location” – the location in the Amazon Kindle edition of the work.

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